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Dear Sirs

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BY FACSIMILE – CONFIRMATION BY MAIL

PCT/GB2004/005275
Our ref: PDF 0312/02 (PCT) – Reverse Variable Authentication Timeout

We refer to the Written Opinion of the ISA issued with the International Search Report of 15 June 2005.

The Written Opinion states that the subject matter of the claims lacks novelty and inventive step over WO 03/007570 (D1). The Applicant respectfully refutes the views as set out in the Written Opinion.

Document D1 describes a system for processing encrypted messages on a mobile device. At the mobile device, the information required to access the encrypted message, is received and stored into memory. When encrypted content is to be decrypted, the encryption accessing information is retrieved from memory. In essence, this encryption accessing information is the decrypted session key, and on page 16 paragraph 2, the document discloses that the decrypted key may be stored for only a particular period of time, which may be set by the user of the device. Hence, more sensitive messages from particular addressees may have a relative short decrypted session key storage period, whereas messages from personal contacts may be accorded a longer decrypted session key storage period. The document also describes how particular mail content, such as wording in the subject line, may be used to control the decrypted session key storage period.

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The system described in D1 is therefore concerned with authorising something (the decrypted session key) for a particular period of time following the current authentication. The system described in D1 is able to authorise the session key for a particular period of time because it is only concerned about unlocking encryption keys and does not attempt in any way whatsoever to anticipate in advance all the operations for which a user might require authentication; the passage on page 16 of D1 referred to in the Opinion is only concerned with one operation of the user, which is accessing and reading mail.

This is in strict contrast to the present invention, which assesses the 'freshness' of the authentication *of the identity of the user* at the time the user requires to perform a specific action on the device. Whether or not the user is then able to carry out a desired operation depends upon the nature of the operation and the 'freshness' of the authentication of the identity of the user.   The present invention accounts, therefore, for various actions or operations which can be performed on the device by a user and sets authentication freshness criteria for the possible actions or operations. There is no hint whatsoever of this method of device operation in the system described in D1.

Accordingly, it is submitted that the invention as claimed does constitute subject matter which meets the criteria of Article 33(1) PCT.

In order to clarify the technical nature of this invention, the claims of the application have been redrafted and are now directed to a method of operating a computing device, and not to a method of communicating information between computing devices Accordingly, a replacement set of claims is filed herewith.

In the light of the above arguments and amendments, re-consideration of the present application is requested.   A Demand for Preliminary Examination of this application is being filed concurrently herewith.   Should the examiner

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require further clarification resulting from such Preliminary Examination, a further Written Opinion is requested.

Yours faithfully,

Gino Sorenti

Agent for the Applicants